

(Mr. McHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS ALTERNATIVE FISCAL YEAR '08 BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as the Health Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus to express my strong support for the Congressional Black Caucus' alternative fiscal year '08 budget and to urge its passage.

I want to begin by applauding our leadership, our chairwoman, CAROLYN KILPATRICK, and the person who headed up our Budget Task Force for his hard work, skill, leadership and commitment to justice it represents, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT.

This is a smart and responsible budget that is as fiscally sound as it is congruent to the needs, hopes and aspirations not only of African Americans, but of all Americans.

This budget uses the Democratic budget, a good budget itself, as a starting point and takes a step further by putting \$112 billion more in education, training, employment and social services; \$9 billion more in veterans benefits and services; \$8 billion more in homeland security. And over a 5-year period, it spends more than \$101 billion on health care. It does all of this and more while balancing the budget in 2012 and creating \$141 billion surplus, beginning to reduce the burden that the Republican spending spree would have placed on future generations.

Four years ago, the current administration began taking us down the slippery slope of huge deficits and unprecedented debt by giving tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans instead of using that money to strengthen our country by investing in the American people. This budget rescinds some of those tax cuts and incentives, including the tax cuts to the top two tiers of income, tax cuts that this country could not afford then and cannot afford today.

By rescinding those tax cuts, which is where our budget departs from the Democratic base budget, we begin now to correct the wrong that was perpetrated particularly on the poor and middle class, and we put the interests of the majority of this Nation's hard-working families at the forefront of our spending priorities, and Mr. Speaker, it is about time.

While this is true across every line item, it is especially true as it relates to spending on health and health care. As I have previously observed and stated on the RECORD, the President's fiscal year 2008 budget proposes to eliminate, cut or flat fund every single program that is critical to reducing health disparities or to strengthening the health and wellness of African Ameri-

cans and other people of color across this Nation.

The Democratic budget, for which I applaud Chairman JOHN SPRATT, does much to restore these programs, at least in part. But the health deficit of African Americans and other people of color, of the poor and rural Americans requires a major investment to reverse the severely adverse impact of long-term neglect, neglect which is not only causing excess deaths, but driving up the cost of health care and undermining the quality of care for all Americans.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the CBC alternative budget uses the additional funding stream from the funds we put back into the budget to maintain, create or expand programs that are proven to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities that have left more people of color in poorer health, without access to adequate health care, and more likely to die prematurely from preventable causes often during their most productive years for far too long.

Programs like Healthy Start, nurse education and other health profession programs, the Ryan-White Care Act, Health Careers Opportunity programs, Gulf Coast Health Infrastructure, Maternal and Child Health get the funding they need. And NIH and community health centers get an additional increase as well.

Most importantly, we create a health equity fund to fund prevention programs that pay for themselves and create value, and which make that investment to fill in the gaps in health care in poor and rural communities and communities of color, and to improve the health status of all Americans.

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The CBC budget through its investment in education, economic opportunity, housing, and all of the social determinants of health provide that kind of holistic approach to our communities and our Nation's well-being that had been missing and for which we are all, but especially people of color, paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Martin Luther King once said that the moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice. The CBC resets the moral compass of our Nation, and the CBC sits at the elbow of justice. And by supporting the CBC budget we not only will be championing justice and equity in health care but in all social, public and economic policies and programs that currently fail far too many of our Nation's citizens and which have thus created two Americas separated by a wide and deep chasm of inequality.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Martin Luther King also said that the time is always right to do what is right. Well, that time is now, and doing what is right is passing the CBC alternative budget. I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this well-constructed, sound budget that sets a new direction for this country not just for today but for tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POMEROY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ELLISON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CBC BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. I would like to begin by congratulating Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK, the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, Chair of the CBC Budget Task Force, for their leadership in developing the CBC budget.

I strongly support the CBC budget because it provides sufficient funding for critical domestic priorities such as health care, education, and community development. For example, the CBC budget spends \$112 billion more than the Budget Committee's budget and \$158 billion more than the President's budget on education, training, employment, and social services. Yet the CBC budget still eliminates the deficit by 2012.

As the Chair of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, I am deeply concerned about the need for affordable housing in America. The CBC budget recognizes that affordable housing is all but out of reach for many Americans. Just imagine, the 2006 average minimum wage required to rent affordable housing is \$16.31 an hour, more than three times the Federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour, putting most housing out of reach for many American families.

Approximately 6 million persons in this country are very needy, paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing. This is a real threat to families trying to educate their children and make ends meet. Affordable rental housing is critical to communities across this Nation. Public housing is still part of the solution, community development programs are part of the solution, and the renewal of the section 8 voucher and many other housing programs is part of the solution.

The President's fiscal year 2008 budget request would cut overall net funding for public housing by \$477 million, from \$6.4 billion to \$5.9 billion, a cut of 7 percent. While the budget increases the operating fund by \$136 million, public housing authorities are estimated to receive only 80 percent of their total operating expenses. The budget decreases the capital fund used to repair

and modernize public housing units by \$415 million, to only \$2.0 billion.

Continuing a downward spiral in funding, this is part of the effort to dismantle public housing as we know it. We cannot sit idly by and let this happen. The community development programs would be seriously eroded and undermined if left to this administration. The Brownfields and the section 108 loan guarantee program would also be eliminated. The Community Development Block Grant Program would be cut by 20 percent, losing \$735 million. And the list goes on and on.

In addition, Section 202 and 811 housing programs for the elderly and disabled would be cut drastically in the administration budget proposal. Rural housing programs would also suffer serious cutbacks faring no better.

The administration's budget proposes to terminate the major Rural Section 515 rental housing program, which would leave thousands of families living in rural communities, many poor, working families with children, and the disabled and elderly without affordable housing.

There is another issue that I feel strongly about that is addressed in this budget. As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, I am highly concerned about the origin and proliferation of gangs in communities throughout the United States. Along with full committee chairman JOHN CONYERS and Crime Subcommittee chairman BOBBY SCOTT, I plan to retool existing authorized Federal programs to comprehensively address this problem. This requires full funding of the following programs: the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program, the Youth Violence Reduction Demonstration Projects that are administered by the Department of Justice, and the Compassion Capital Fund, which is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

In the city of Los Angeles, there are approximately 4,000 gangs and 39,000 gang members. For 2006, there were about 470 homicides, and 250 were gang related. Of the shootings in the city last year, 70 percent were gang related. According to a September 1, 2006, report by Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, it costs about \$287 million to treat and hospitalize victims of nonfatal gang assaults countywide in one year.

This is not only in Los Angeles. There are gang problems all over America, and not simply in our cities but in our rural communities, in our suburban communities.

It is about time that we focus some efforts on dealing with the gangs from two perspectives:

Number one, we have got to have prevention. We have got to be able to provide social services. We have got to be able to meet the needs of people in communities that have no hope.

Number two, yes, we must be tough. But the answer is not simply lock them

up and throw the key away. The answer is, how do we prevent young people, young children, from connecting and getting involved with gangs in the first place? We need serious funding and smart assembly of existing programs to effectively halt the recruitment of new gang members.

We need serious funding and smart assembly of existing programs to effectively halt the recruitment of new gang members; to reduce the incidence of homicide and violence between gangs; to implement programs that deliver support services and job training; and to enable communities to solve problems that lead to race-related gang tensions.

CONCLUSION

I urge all of my colleagues to support the CBC Budget so that we can begin to tackle important issues like gang violence and the need for affordable housing in our communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BUDGETING FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today the House began debate on the budget for the next year. This is the time when each party shows its true priorities. The Democrats have promised to ensure our homeland security while providing for the needs of America's working families: health care, education, safe communities.

This is another chance to tell the people to tell the administration that we are not going to fund this misguided occupation of Iraq. We are quickly approaching one-half trillion dollars for the occupation of Iraq, including billions that have been lost, misallocated, or squandered, while drastically cutting important domestic programs in the United States of America.

Let me say that one more time: one-half trillion dollars. What comes after a trillion? A zillion? This might not mean much to some of the folks in Washington, but to the people scraping to get by this means everything.

We are in the fifth year of this occupation, and if we follow the leadership of the administration we will be there for years to come. In fact, they even

say that the exit strategy for Iraq will be decided by future presidents. Presidents. Not one, but many. This is really unacceptable.

The Progressive Caucus budget, the Peace and Security budget, takes a stand against the ridiculous budget request and puts the money where it will do the most good. By ending our military presence in Iraq, we can save at least \$202 billion over the next 2 years. Doing that, we can focus on the real needs of Americans.

The Congressional Progressive Caucus budget will fully fund No Child Left Behind and IDEA and improve the Teacher Corps and job training. It will provide affordable, accessible, quality health care for Americans, starting with fully funding the SCHIP program to ensure that every American child is covered for basic health insurance. It will rebuild America's communities by increasing funding for Community Development Block Grants, Hurricane Katrina relief, and reconstruction and community policing. It also guarantees veterans health care and ensures that the Federal funding that is needed will be available to provide health care, including mental health care, for every single American veteran, including but not limited to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

This Peace and Security budget gives a fair shake for working families by increasing funding to protect fundamental worker rights, enforcing credit and lending practices, and promoting liveable wages and safe work places. It also will renew the social contract and 21st century safety net by substantially increasing funding for decent, affordable housing, for anti-hunger programs, and more quality child care for low-income and impoverished Americans, including Hurricane Katrina victims.

Does this mean that we will abandon our obligation throughout the world? Absolutely not. We will support the Smart Security Plan by increasing nonmilitary spending to enhance homeland security and to fight the root causes of terrorism, a real 21st century diplomacy plan that meets basic human needs such as fighting HIV and AIDS and providing for universal basic education.

If we had spent the last 4 years focusing on the real needs of America's working families and not fighting this endless, misguided occupation of Iraq, America would be safer, more prosperous and a leader in peace and security worldwide.

It is time to bring common sense and reason back to our foreign policy. I call on my colleagues to join me in supporting the Progressive Caucus budget, the Peace and Security budget, and to join me in the call to bring our troops home now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.